via donau MANAGEMENT CHANGE

After eleven exciting and interesting years as managing director of via donau, Österreichische Wasserstraßen-Gesellschaft, Manfred Seitz (46) will be leaving the company at the end of 2009, it was reported from Vienna shortly before Christmas. Under his leadership, via donau became an important partner for the European Commission with regard to issues such as new technologies for inland navigation, the growing importance of the Danube waterway and the Danube region and the development and implementation of an active European inland navigation policy.

In the past decade, Seitz succeeded in positioning via donau as a national and international competence centre for the development and implementation of River Information Services and inland navigation policy.

via donau is regarded today in the Danube region as a key driving force behind the development of the Danube waterway and a highly successful public enterprise. “From an economic and environmental point of view, there is no alternative to an efficient Danube waterway in the long run. However, an efficient waterway requires the provision of guaranteed minimum fairway depths by waterway administrations and the consistent and comprehensive future development of the whole sector,” said Seitz in his farewell speech, emphasising the great significance of the Danube waterway.

According to Seitz, the opportunities the Danube provides for Austria’s businesses are found in the availability of an efficient transport infrastructure and the joint implementation of innovative projects. He continued, “In this way, via donau is, and will keep, making an important contribution to securing the location of Austrian enterprises and simultaneously support the environmentally friendly management of future transport volumes in the Danube corridor.”

In the first years of his career with via donau, Manfred Seitz was the managing director of a development company with about 50 employees and a project portfolio of approximately 30 projects in the fields of intermodal waterway transport and logistics, transport telematics, knowledge transfer and navigation policy. This company was the backbone in the re-organisation of the federal government’s waterway administration responsibilities (Waterway Act), adopted by the Austrian National Council in 2004. Within the newly established company via donau – Österreichische Wasserstraßen GmbH, Manfred Seitz became managing director for the business area inland navigation and finance. In this capacity, he was responsible for the professional management of the company’s
activities in the fields of lock supervision and operation of the DoRIS river information system and for the development and implementation of all national and international inland navigation development projects.